

Drama League to premiere *Babooshka*

The South Canterbury Drama League is to present the New Zealand premiere of the play *Babooshka*.

Babooshka has been a sell-out success at the Pleasance Theatre, Edinburgh Festival 2005. Local woman Pam Mains saw the play and was captivated. A few e-mails, correspondence with writer Kiki Kendrick, and local director Carol England secured the rights.

The new 90-minute play shows how media manipulation is eating away at women's self-esteem.

It is set in the unflinching honesty of the dressing room of a department store, where a young celebrity-obsessed sales assistant tends to the needs of four women.

Three of them; a hard, career-driven 'go-getter', a young mum battling post-baby plumpness, and an older mum finding it hard to accept her age, are in a frantic search to find the right facade to present their desired image to the outside world.

The fourth, a fifties-plus woman, who 'has left all that nonsense behind' acknowledges that sometimes it takes great pain to realise there's more to life than worrying that "fashion doesn't do 40".

As well as being extremely entertaining, *Babooshka* deals with serious issues relating to women in a consumer-driven society.



BARING ALL: Baring bodies and minds in the New Zealand premier of *Babooshka* are, from left, Diana Steven, Erin Kirkwood, Pat Bartholomew, Katrina Goodyer and Raewyn Guise.

It is cleverly written, has catchy music and choreographed dance sequences.

Ms England said the actresses had been very unselfconscious about appearing on stage in their undies, and said

their willingness to do so showed how much they liked the play.

Given its setting, the play involved a lot of costume changes, so the actresses were rehearsing those, and Bendon had supplied the lingerie.

Babooshka will play at The Playhouse, Church Street, from May 20 to 27, and the audience will also be treated to a fashion parade, the bar, coffee and Denheath custard squares — reflecting themes of fashion and food from the play.